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ABSTRACT

The identity problems of school psychologists are complicated by the emergence of applied developmental psychology. Traditionally, school psychology has recognized developmental psychology as one of its major foundations; however, the two fields are not synonymous. School psychology also applies other disciplinary practices, and conversely, all applications of developmental psychology are not limited to school settings. Applied developmental psychology specifically refers to a doctoral specialty, characterized by an emphasis on developmental research and theory, training for a broad array of settings, a lifespan developmental model, and an interdisciplinary, consultative model. As such, licensure should be separate from clinical licensure. School psychology at the doctoral level may be better termed educational psychology, emphasizing research, evaluation, and consultation within the school setting. Professional recognition and acceptance of applied developmental psychology will depend upon the personal characteristics and attitudes of those in the field. (BL)

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APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY:
WHAT IS ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY?

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Applied Developmental Psychology:

What is its Relationship to School Psychology?

While school psychology remains embroiled in its adolescent quandries of "Who am I?", "How am I different from others?", and "What am I becoming?", the rest of the world moves on, stubbornly refusing to sit still until school psychology passes through its awkward, often embarrassing stage. Just when school psychologists thought their identity problems could not be more complicated, an emerging specialty may further complicate matters. It is analogous to the problem of adolescents, striving to understand themselves and how they fit into the world, believing that if events would not change so fast and so often, growing up would not be nearly so difficult.

The emerging specialty is applied developmental psychology. I suspect that predominant reactions from those who are involved in school psychology's struggles will be "Oh no--what is <u>that</u>?", "How do they relate to school psychology (whatever we decide it is)?", and "How should we feel about this newcomer?"

Before we address those questions, let us backtrack for a moment and remind ourselves of some obvious facts. School psychology has long recognized that developmental psychology is one of its major foundations, contributing theoretical frameworks and research around which much practice is based. The relationship is long and close in another sense as well. Years ago, before we became so obsessed with specialty titles and boundaries, a prominent psychologist whom we identify primarily as a developmentalist, became the first to hold the professional title, "school psychologist." Who indeed would be more certainly an applied developmental psychologist than Arnold Gesell? Through the years, psychologists of many types, but largely clinical, educational and developmental, were "psychologists working in schools" whose work eventually

defined what we now call school psychology. An example more recent than Gesell would be Susan Gray whose training was in educational psychology and is considered a pioneer in the historical development of school psychology (Gray, 1963).

One could reasonably argue that school psychology is applied developmental psychology, although the two are not completely overlapping sets. School psychology also concerns the application of other "psychologies" and other disciplines, and certainly all applications of developmental psychology are not limited to school settings. All of these conclusions may be reached without knowing anything about how applied developmental psychology as a separate specialty is currently being defined. Perhaps now we should move to those three questions earlier posed: (1) How is applied developmental psychology being defined?, (2) What are its areas of overlap and difference from school psychology?, and (3) How should school psychologists feel about a "new kid" on a block many regard as overcrowded?

While many universities offer masters degrees in developmental psychology (even more if you include child development programs not in psychology) with an applied focus (e.g., Peabody's terminal master's child development specialist program), the emerging specialty we're discussing here is a doctoral specialty. Graduate Study in Psychology, published by APA, lists four doctoral programs with applied developmental designations: University of Miami, Tufts University, University of Maryland, and University of New Orleans. The structure of these training programs constitutes the best definition of the specialty at this time and structural components of the programs are discussed in a series of articles published in the Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology (1983, Volume 4) which originated in a symposium held

at the Mailman Center of the University of Miami in 1980. Some emerging characteristics seem to be these:

1. A heavy emphasis on developmental research and theory--the core of traditional developmental programs--but with training in applied research and evaluation and broad application of research.
2. If training in direct service delivery is included at all, it is not a central component. Courses in individual assessment and therapy are likely to be optional. Applied developmental is not seen as a "back-door" to clinical or other professional specialties.
3. An orientation toward training for a very broad array of settings where developmental psychology may be applied. Where the clinician's setting is the clinic, the school psychologist's setting is the school, applied developmentalists' settings would be more diverse.
4. A lifespan developmental model not necessarily limited to children.
5. A consultative model as opposed to direct service delivery and a preventive rather than a therapeutic orientation.
6. An interdisciplinary approach to socially relevant problems and public policy concerns.
7. While licensure is desirable, a separate category from clinical may be appropriate, or if clinical licensure is desired, additional training including a clinical internship would be required.

Pertinent to this last point is a resolution recently passed by APA's Council of Representatives (Koocher, personal communication, 1984) stating that it is not necessarily inappropriate for APA-approved internship sites to offer specialized training in child and family assessment and interventions to

well qualified individuals with doctorates in developmental psychology or to students pursuing such graduate degrees. Furthermore, the Education and Training Board and its Committee on Accreditation has been asked to review and develop recommendations for the accreditation of programs in Applied Developmental Psychology analogous to current procedure for clinical/counseling/school programs.

Our second question, "What is the relationship of applied developmental psychology to school psychology?" is less clear, but a few conclusions may be reached:

1. The definers of applied developmental psychology seem more concerned at present with differentiation from developmental and clinical psychology. School psychology is mentioned infrequently.
2. The broad scope of applications of developmental being discussed seem very consistent with Bardon's (1983) American Psychologist article in which he proposes renaming doctoral level school psychology applied educational psychology or something similar.
3. Some particular doctoral programs in school psychology would overlap substantially with applied developmental, while others would not. School psychology programs in departments of educational psychology with emphases on research, evaluation, and consultation would likely overlap. Those focusing more on the "clinical" aspects of assessment and therapy with children would overlap less.

Finally, the question of whether school psychologists will welcome those who call themselves applied developmental psychologists or regard them as intruders is perhaps even less predictable. Master's-level practitioners are unlikely to be threatened, so while they may not greet the newcomer with

enthusiasm, they are unlikely to harbor resentment. Those aspiring to further educational credentials may in fact appreciate another option. Also, those who see the battle for ownership of school psychologists as masters versus doctoral may see the new specialty as further evidence for disunity in the doctoral camp. For doctoral-level psychologists, the new specialty is likely to be unsettling to those who wish for more standardization of programs and specialties. Some exclusionary attitudes among those who wish to tighten boundaries are perhaps inevitable. On an optimistic note, there will also be those who regard the proliferation of specialties as evidence of a healthy profession growing and evolving in many directions in response to contemporary problems and needs. Indeed, one would hope that we would begin to realize that the "rest of the world," if we may return to the thought we began with, will move on with us or without us. We may choose to spend more and more time arguing about who is qualified to do what to whom, or we can decide to devote that time to more productive efforts.

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